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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if reading aloud to children regularly would have an effect on their motivation and desire to read independently. Subjects, 100 fourth and fifth grade students in Wayne, New Jersey, participated in the study. One fourth and one fifth grade class were read to on a daily basis for 30 minutes. The second fourth and fifth grade classes read independently in their free time if they chose to do so. A pretest and posttest were given using the Estes Scale to Measure Attitudes toward Reading. The school librarian kept a running record of all four classes, indicating by classroom the amount of books that were taken out per class. The results indicated that reading aloud to fourth and fifth grade students does result in a positive change in their attitudes toward reading, and motivated them to take out books independently. This study spanned a fairly short period of time; a longer study could reexamine the hypothesis. Admittedly, reading aloud to students will not solve all the problems, but it may be one of the most important steps toward creating a positive attitude and motivation toward reading. (Contains 68 references and 3 tables of data; the survey instrument is attached.) (Author/RS)

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ED 427 308

The Effects of Reading Aloud In Motivating and Enhancing Students' Desire To Read Independently

By Kari Ann Hemerick

Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree

May, 1999

CS 013 938

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if reading aloud to children regularly would have an effect on their motivation and desire to read independently. Subjects, 100 fourth and fifth grade students in Wayne, New Jersey participated in the study. One fourth and fifth grade class were read to on a daily basis for 30 minutes. The second fourth and fifth grade classes read independently in their free time if they chose to do so. A pretest and posttest were given using the Estes Scale to Measure Attitudes toward Reading. The school librarian kept a running record of all four classes indicating by classroom the amount of books that were taken out per class. The result indicated that reading aloud to fourth and fifth grade students does result in a positive change of their attitudes toward reading, and motivated them to take out books independently. This study spanned a fairly short period of time; a longer study could reexamine the hypothesis of this study. Admittedly, reading aloud to students will not solve all the problems, but it may be one of the most important steps toward creating a positive attitude and motivation toward reading.

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"The big question in this country is not whether children can read, but whether they will read (Coopermann, 1986). One important tool in an elementary program should be the fostering of positive attitudes towards reading. Too many students dislike reading in school and object to reading independently (Trelease, 1985). Educators need to explore the possibilities of the use of exciting techniques which will motivate students to read on their own.

The Commission on Reading, made-up of outstanding men and women in the fields of reading, learning, and child development, spent two years dredging through two decades worth of reading research and practice and issused its report in 1985 - Becoming a Nation of Readers. Among its essential findings, one simple proclamation rang loud and clear: "The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children" (Trelease, 1985). However, teachers seem to abandon this practice as the children progress in academic years (Richardson, 1994).

Because of the demands of state mandates and core proficiencies, teachers in the intermediate grades and above make little time in the school day to read aloud to students. Hall's studies, in 1971, report fewer than half of the teachers (46%) surveyed read to children on a regular basis. Exposure to literature increases the desire to read. Jim Trelease (1995) states if students are not read to, if day after day the only reading they hear is the monotnous droning of fellow members in the "turtle" reading group, they are certain to finish the year sounding like a "turtle." He found that

teachers need to let children know through reading aloud that there is more to reading than worksheets - and it must be done before children close the door on reading for the rest of their lives.

In Becoming a Nation of Readers, the authors note that "reading is a basic life skill. It is the cornerstone for a child's success in school, and indeed, throughout life." (1984, p. 1) If research is showing that substantial numbers of students today choose not to read despite the fact that they know how, this should be a major cause for concern, especially for children in the intermediate grades.

In the classroom, teachers who enjoy reading, who seize every opportunity to provide enjoyable reading experience for their students, and who allow time for pleasurable reading during school hours are encouraging positive behaviors (Trelease,1995). Reading aloud regularly can help accomplish this objective and should continue beyond the primary grades (Richardson, 1997).

It is theoretically sound to extend the concept of reading aloud from young children to those in the intermediate grades (Cosgrove, 1988). Since permanent reading habits develop between the ages of ten and twelve, it is critical that teachers do everything possible to instill a love and respect for reading in children during that time period (Lamme, 1976). Chambers (1973) and Kimmel (1983) as cited in Cosgrove (1988) summarize the need to read aloud to children by theorizing that it will promote reading interest

and increase independent reading for intermediate grade students, as it seemingly does for younger students.

Reading aloud is an effective tool for the advertisement of reading for pleasure. Smith (1989) suggests when students hear a story they often are motivated to read it themselves. He further explains that reading aloud to children stimulates their interests and appreciation of certain literature. Jim Trelease (1989 b., p. 8) cited "Early experiences with the richness and variety of real reading materials seems to give children reason to read, teaching them not only how to read, but to want to read."

Kemmel and Segel (1988) indicated that reading aloud to children builds the desire to read. They wrote, "Reading is one of the most basic educational practices. It is through reading aloud that children learn that reading for pleasures is worthwhile" (p. 30). However, the most important reason for reading aloud to children, as Durkin (1984) suggest, is for enjoyment, and enjoyment can lead to internal motivation to read.

Hypothesis:

This study was established to determine the effects of Reading Aloud as opposed to not reading aloud on student's motivation towards reading. For this study, it was hypothesized that reading aloud to students will not provide them with the motivation to seek out books for their own reading pleasure.

Procedures:

This study was conducted over a period of eight weeks at Randall Carter Elementary School in Wayne, New Jersey. An approximation of 100 students were used, two fourth grade classrooms and two fifth grade classrooms.

Two samples were used in both fourth and fifth grade: a control sample and an experimental sample. The two experimental samples received daily read aloud stories from quality literature for approximately a half an hour a day. During the read aloud session opportunities for responding to the literature were provide. The control sample did not receive daily read aloud instruction and read independently in their free time if they chose to do so.

Before the study began, students were given the Estes Scale to Measure Attitudes. At the end of the eight week study the students were again given the Estes Scale to Measure Attitudes as a posttest and the individual scores were recorded. The students scores for the pretest and the posttest were subtracted from each other, so that the change in attitudes toward reading could be noted. Mean scores of the pretest and the posttest results were compared utilizing a *t* test to determine group differences.

The school librarian kept a running record of all the four classes participating in this study. The running record indicated, by classroom, the amount of books that were taken out per class.

Results:

Table I shows the results of the Estes Attitude Scale before the study

Table I

The results of the Estes Attitude Scale

Before Study

Sample	Mean	S. D.	*t*	
Experimental	63.45	15.30	4.02	sig.<.01
Control	45.75	17.37		

began. There was a significant difference between the samples prior to the study as indicated by the *t* of 4.02.

Table II indicates attitudes among the Estes Scale at the conclusion of

Table II

The Results of the Estes Attitude Scale

Post Study

Sample	Mean	S. D.	*t*	
Experimental	58.78	12.52	5.17	sig.<.01
Control	42.10	16.09		

the study. Both samples mean scores went down three to five points at the conclusion of the study. The *t* of 5.17 indicated that the relative difference between the samples at the outset was maintained by the end of the study and this difference was still significant below the .01 line. No change in attitudes on this scale could be discerned.

The experimental sample took out 65 more books form the school

Table III

Books Withdrawn From School Library

Experimental	245 books
Control	180 books

library as opposed to students not read to. The number reveals a motivation in children to read independently as a result of being read to in class.

Conclusions and Implications:

This study set out to discover whether reading aloud to children would motivate them to seek out books for their own reading pleasure. The Estes scale of Reading determined that the attitudes of the students not being read to and being read to before and after the study were significantly different. All four classes had positive experiences with reading. Although the questionnaire continued to show a significant difference in attitudes

between the two samples, the difference varies somewhat. There appeared to be a major difference when it came to reading independently. As indicated in table III, students who were read to on a daily basis checked out more books independently from the library than those not read to. Thus, the hypothesis set forth in this study was rejected.

Such findings have implications on future research to gain more insights on how reading aloud directly affects students' attitudes and motivation toward reading. There is a need not only for research to answer the question of whether reading aloud to children makes them have a more positive attitude toward reading but research that shows what factors makes them motivated to read independently.

Another implication from this study indicated that teachers should be paying close attention to their students' attitudes toward reading. Knowing which students have a positive or negative outlook on reading will help teachers to provide opportunities for the students to listen to and read books that will stimulate them to read more on their own. In order for students to want to read, negative attitudes toward the idea of reading must be changed. The development of positive attitudes toward reading should be an important goal of any reading program.

The study was conducted over a short period of time, eight weeks, and the read aloud sessions took place for a half an hour on a daily basis. An implication for further research could be done to explore if a positive change in attitude toward reading would be higher if the study lasted for a

longer amount of time. Perhaps pre-testing in the fall and post-testing in the spring would establish more of a difference between the samples.

It also seemed that even though the students were told to answer honestly, that some may have responded to the questions in a way which they feel would be the "right" answers. If this is the case, then knowing that reading is very important to their teacher may have influenced their responses to the questionnaire.

Teachers reading aloud to students on a regular basis will not solve all the problems or give all the answers to how to develop a positive attitude toward reading, or how to motivate students to read independently, but it may be one of the most important stepping stones toward an activity and should not be left to happen by chance. Reading aloud requires an investment in time, skill, resources, and management. Quality literature needs to be read to keep the attention of students during the read aloud experience.

Reading aloud is a powerful tool. It can lead to a wonderful and positive life long gift from a teacher to a student that will hopefully ensure that spark of motivation and love for reading.

RELATED RESEARCH

The Commission on Reading (Anderson et al. 1985, p. 7) defines reading as: "the process of constructing meaning from written texts. It is a complex skill requiring the coordination of a number of interrelated sources of information." The Commission on Reading defined the skill of reading in five ways (a) reading is a constructive process, (b) reading must have fluency, (c) reading must be strategic, (d) reading requires motivation and (e) reading is a lifelong pursuit. Out of these five attributes motivation is the skill that is focused as the key in learning to read. This motivation is constructed from the belief that reading can be interesting and informative. Attitude, desire and motivation make reading a lifelong pursuit.

Emerson White wrote in 1886:

> It seems important to note in this connection that the development of the intellectual faculties is conditioned upon the corresponding development of the sensibility and the will. The activity of the mind in knowing depends among other things, on the acuteness and energy of the senses, the intensity of the emotions and desires, and the energy and constancy of the will. (p.92)

Over 100 years later, Paris, Lipson, and Wixson (1983) affirm the importance of motivation in a student's ability to become an independent learner.

Motivation has been defined as the process of initiating, directing, and sustaining behavior. Motivation is viewed as a drive toward competence that is sustained and augmented by the feelings of efficacy that

accompany competent interaction with the environment (Connel and Ryan, 1984).

When students fail to value reading as a source of information and enjoyment, they are at risk of reading failure. Motivation is a central component of the reading comprehension process (Matthewson, 1976). When students are motivated, they will want to pick up materials to read.

Encouraging students to choose reading as an activity should be a major goal of reading instruction. The teacher plays a critical role in motivating students to read. Richardson (1997) states that one of the keys to motivating a student to read is a teacher who values reading and is enthusiastic about sharing a love of reading with the students. If a teacher associates reading with enjoyment, pleasure, and learning, students will be more likely to become voluntary lifelong readers (Wilson and Gambrell, 1988). Learning to read and gaining a love for reading depends on motivation, practice and reinforcement.

Most children are eager to begin their reading career; they are motivated to read. However, when students encounter difficulties in reading they become less motivated to participate in a frustrating reading experience. In a speech, "The Right to Read: Target for the 70's," former Commissioner of Education, James E. Allen, Jr. (1969), included the development of a desire and motivation to read as an essential complement to the development of the skills of reading, cited in Hall (1971):

> It must be recognized, however, that for the majority who do acquire the basic reading skills, there can also be a barrier which limits the fulfillment of their right to read. This barrier exists when the skill of reading is not accompanied by the desire and motivation to read. We fail, therefore, just as much in assuring the right to read when the desire and motivation is absent, as when the skills are missing. (pp. 31-47)

Therefore it is the classroom teacher's task to provide materials that will motivate students and turn them on to reading.

Reading aloud to students is one way to motivate them to read (Butler, 1980). Jim Trelease (1989), states "that reading aloud is motivational, the desire is the 'lead role'." Reading aloud can successfully motivate students to read on their own (Ecroyd, 1991). When students listen to a teacher read, they are getting a message that reading is important. Bill Holloran (1976), cited in Ecroyd (1991), states:

> It is the teacher's job to be the leader, the motivator, the stimulator, the one who creates an exciting atmosphere. Reading aloud can provide this atmosphere, this motivation.

Reading aloud will motivate students to embark on other areas of interest (Casteel, 1989). Students are given an opportunity to enjoy reading when teachers motivate them and read aloud (Johns, 1978). When students hear a story they are often motivated to read it themselves. Bruce Chadwick (1982), reminisced about his days as a young man at a summer camp. He had fond memories of reading aloud stories of Edgar Allen Poe Tales. His

audiences were wrapped up and involved in what he was reading. Reading aloud was the motivation that Chadwick feels pushed him toward reading more independently thus, improving his attitudes and interests about reading.

According to Matthewson (1994), a person's attitude toward reading which includes feelings, readiness, and beliefs about reading, can result in an intention to read or continue reading, which leads to motivating the act of reading. The Meaning Makers (Wells, 1986), reports on a 15-year longitudinal study of the developmental literacy of children in Bristol, England. Wells found that the most significant factor of whether children were good readers and motivated to read in second grade and again at school leaving age was whether they had been read aloud to.

Trelease (1984) suggests to provide a nurturing and motivating environment in the classroom by reading aloud daily to students and providing a variety of good books.

Reading Aloud

> "Most people, regardless of age can be captivated by a good story teller. Children are especially susceptible to the charm of a good story being read by a good reader. Therefore, teachers should consider the reading of good stories to children as one of their major responsibilities in the development of positive attitudes toward reading."
>
> (Smith, 1980)

Thompkins and Weber (1983), describe a five step teaching strategy to direct students' attention to features of a book while reading aloud:

1. Read the title aloud, show the cover and/or illustrations and ask the students to predict what they think the story is about.

2. Read the first few pages, stop and ask the students to predict what will happen next or what a character will say.

3. Ask the students why they made their predictions.

4. Read the next few pages and allow students to confirm or reject their predictions.

5. Continue reading the selection repeating steps two, three, and four.

Smith (1988, cited in McKenna and Kear, 1990) stated that "the emotional response to reading ... is the primary reason most readers read, and probably the primary reason most nonreaders do not read ..." (p. 626). Wilson and Aall (1972, cited in Alexaner and Feller, 1976, p. 1) stated that a positive attitude is "essential for successful mastery of the printed page."

Teachers should read aloud daily to their students. Johns, 1978, feels it is an essential ingredient in the total reading program. Michener (1988) finds research support for the following statements about reading aloud to students and how it benefits in the total reading program:

1. Helps them get off to a better start in reading

2. Improves their listening skills
3. Increases their abilities to read independently
4. Expands their vocabularies
5. Helps them become better speakers
6. Improves their abilities as writers
7. Improves reading comprehension
8. Improves quantity and quality of independent reading

Reading aloud makes lasting and memorable impressions on students. Reading aloud provides experiences that cannot be replicated by other activities. One boy, when asked to describe the best thing about having someone read to him, responded that "If your eyes aren't busy, your imagination is free to roam" (Mendoza, 1985). Reading aloud should be a regular part of the daily schedule. It can make a lasting contribution to helping students become effective and enthusiastic readers (Smith, 1989).

As Smith (1992), goes on to explain, reading to children not only puts children in the "company of people who read" but also puts them in the "company of authors." In reading aloud, the teacher the pictures, changes vocal and facial expressions to reflect mood and dialogue, and maintains eye contact with listeners. Donald Graves (1983) writes, "Surround the children with literature ... pick up voices, stimulate inventions, feel language, try new narratives."

Reading aloud, according to Indrisano fosters positive adult-child relationships. It implies a personal relationship with a caring adult. It can be a powerful tool for reaching out to young minds. Teachers can use this strong instructional and relationship tool to provide experiences on various topics, encourage oral expression and promote literacy.

Artley (1975), surveyed 100 junior and senior education majors and asked them to recall what turned them on or off about reading when they were in elementary school. Artley noted, "the greatest number said that teachers reading to the class on any level was the thing they remembered and enjoyed the most."

Kemmel and Segal (1988), stated that reading aloud to children builds the desire to read. They wrote, "Reading is one of the most basic educational practices. It is through reading aloud that children learn that reading for pleasure is worthwhile'' (p. 30).

Dwyer and Isabel (1990, p. 70) states, " Reading aloud to students introduces them to good literature, encourages language development, and demonstrates that wonderful experiences can come from books." According to Dwyer and Isabel, the most important reason for reading aloud is for enjoyment and this enjoyment will strengthen young peoples desire to read (1990, p. 70).

Educators agree on the importance of reading aloud to children; the link between reading aloud to children and improved achievement (Clark, 1976). Hennings (1994) described how teachers should read aloud to children several times a day, because story sharing creates far-reaching benefits for the listener. She discussed in detail how stories introduce children to new vocabulary, language patterns, concepts, cultures and lifestyles. Children develop an awareness of story structure by listening to stories and discussing them. Hearing stories read aloud may bring about an interest in reading and a desire to read (Hennings).

Dorothy Cohen (1968) completed a study using a read aloud program in second grade classrooms in New York City. Using an experimental and control design, she asked the experimental classrooms to read aloud everyday, and then dramatize and retell it, or draw a picture of their favorite character. At the end of the year the experimental groups were significantly ahead of the control groups in reading vocabulary and reading comprehension. This study was replicated by Cullinan, Jazzar, and Stuehland (1974) with kindergarten children, yielding similar results.

According to Indrisano (1980) teachers of a beginning reading program have long observed that children who were read to in their preschool years are more prepared for formal reading instruction and are more successful in learning to read than are children who were not read to early in life. Carol Fisher and Barbara Allemen (1984) have done research on what they call the "Read Aloud Remedy". They have developed a list of ten reasons to read aloud to children of all ages:

1. Reading aloud introduces pupils to new words.

2. Reading aloud introduces pupils to more complex sentence structure.

3. Reading aloud exposes them to more standard forms of sentence structure.

4. Reading aloud exposes pupils to various styles of written language.

5. Reading aloud develops a sense of story.

6. Reading aloud motivates children to refine reading skills.

7. Reading aloud provides structure and motivation for creative writing.

8. Reading aloud serves as a spring board to discussions or creative activities.

9. Reading aloud enriches general knowledge.

10. Reading aloud adds pleasure to the day.

The Commission on Reading (Anderson et al., p. 23) stated, "The single most important activity for the building of knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud." Elkind (1989, p. 14) quotes, "Reading aloud regularly to children and giving them picture books on their own stimulates their imaginations and helps them view reading as fun."

Rosenblatt, Walker, and Kurbilz (1979, cited in Mechener, 1988) emphasized the importance of children having fun while reading. They wrote, "Reading aloud to children gives them a feeling that reading is important, fun and informative (p. 188). Huck (1987) summarizes that not only should books provide children with a delightful discovery of knowledge but ultimately with a lifelong appreciation and love of literature.

The long term benefits of reading aloud to children is summarized best by Calloway (1981). He gathered comments from young adults about what "turned students on" in and out of school. The most frequent comments were:

1. My first and fourth grade teachers read books to us.

2. My teachers allowed us to go to the reading corner and pick out a book and read a book of choice.

3. My mother read to us a night when we were young.

Reading aloud demonstrates that wonderful experiences can come from books. Through hearing stories and even factual information from books, children can substantially increase awareness of the world around them (Dwyer, 1988).

Reading aloud from quality literature has become the conerstone of most successful literacy programs (Doiron, 1994). Researchers have

supported the need for reading aloud to children with a variety of studies that indicate a multifaceted role for this simple and pleasurable activity.

Teachers are beginning to realize that they have a responsibility to motivate children to read all types of texts. If teachers read more nonfiction literature aloud, and foster children's curiosity and interest in information, reading expository text will become more natural and much easier for children. The report of the American Library Association's Presidential Committee on Information's Literacy (1989) recognizes that we are in an information age where of the major goals of education is to develop in children an ability "to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information" (p.1). To prepare students for lifelong learning, we need to develop people "who have learned how to learn" (p. 1).

Sanacore (1991) summarizes the benefits in balancing the read aloud component of literacy programs with a variety of texts:

1. Variety allows children to develop flexibility in their reading.

2. Critical thinking and problem solving are supported.

3. Ease and facility in reading for information are nurtured with an early exposure to expository text.

4. Increasing the use of expository text balances the types of communication used in reading.

5. We develop the concept that all types of texts can be functional enjoyable and challenging. (p. 214)

Vardell and Copeland (1992) note although our everyday lives are filled with observations about the world around us, we often neglect the opportunity to engage children in learning the information the world offers: "We introduce our children to great storybooks and novels, forgetting the fascination of facts" (p. 76). Through reading aloud, teachers can capitalize on children's natural curiosity about the world around them. In this way they can ensure that today's children will develop a fascination with facts that leads to a lifelong enthusiasm for reading.

Perez (1986) states that schools are expected to develop children who value and love reading. Teachers play a very important role in helping children love to read. Perez states that teachers can model their enthusiasm by reading aloud to children each day. Bruckerhoff (1977) reported the ways that teachers helped foster positive reading attitudes according to the students, some of the teacher activities that helped their interest in reading were: the teacher being excited about a book, the teacher themselves liked to read, and reading aloud.

Why is it so important for teachers to read aloud to students? Trelease (1989 b, p. 2), wrote, "the initial reasons for reading aloud are the same reasons you talk to a child: to reassure, to entertain, to inform or explain, to arouse curiosity, and to inspire - - and to do it all personally, not impersonally with a machine." Trelease feels these experiences create and

strengthens positive attitudes about reading, and attitudes is the foundation store upon which you build appetites (1989).

Developing a lifelong reader is the major goal of most reading programs. It is assumed by educators the more you read the better you get at it, and the better you get at it, the more you like it (Samuels, 1988).

Willems and Willems (1978) state a read aloud program is crucial to the success of any effective reading curriculum at the elementary school level. As stated by Sears (1984), the ultimate achievement of reading instruction is to produce readers who not only can read but do read, and will continue reading the rest of their lives.

Chall and Snow (1982) wrote that a major problem confronting educators today is the decline of the acquisition of further literacy beyond grade four. Holbrook (1985) cites a national assessment which shows a decline in reading proficiency and interest in reading beginning at grade four, and she suggests that reading aloud to students may be one solution to reverse that decline and promote further literacy.

Greany (1980) found that fifth grade students spent only 5.4% of their leisure time engaged in reading and 22% did not read at all. One possible explanation for the lack of reading as a choice activity may be that reading programs are often skills related and provide little opportunity for students to read for enjoyment (Spiegel, 1981).

Trelease (1982) studied national surveys of teachers and found that more than 60% of the third and fourth grade teachers did not read aloud regularly to their classes. By the sixth grade the percentage was at about 74%. The decline in reading aloud according to Trelease, correlated with a decline in grade level reading performance.

The Center for the Study of Reading recommends that reading aloud "continue through the grades." When a child reaches fourth grade most of the basic skills for literacy have already been taught, however the struggle for literacy is far from over. By the middle grades, the excitement they initially experienced in learning to read in the first grade has given way to boredom or frustration (Trelease, 1991). This can lead to a negative impact on reading. Once the basic skills are taught the only way to increase reading levels is by reading.

Maeroff (1989) had strong opinions about reading aloud to children. He wrote, "Some parents tend to think of reading aloud as an activity to be limited to the preschool years or perhaps lasting for only a few years in the elementary school. This is shortsighted, according to the experts, who urge that reading aloud continue into junior high and perhaps even into high school" (p. 55). However, again more experts are finding that once students reach the middle grades, little time is allocated for children to read and be read to (Huck). She feels that this is ironic because that is a time when they "learn to love reading." Huck states that, "teachers must commit themselves not only to teaching children to read, but to help children to become readers - children who can read, will read, and will want to read.

In Becoming a Nation of Readers, the Commission on Reading stated: "there is no substitution for a teacher who reads stories. It whets the appetite of children for reading and provides a model of skillful oral reading. It is a practice that should continue throughout the grades," cited in Trelease (1989, p. 36). Chambers (1973) and Kimmel (1983) summarize the need to read aloud to children by theorizing that it will promote reading interest and increase independent reading for intermediate grade students, as is seemingly does for younger children. Permanent reading habits develop between the ages of ten and twelve, therefore it is crucial that educators do everything possible for reading in students during that period (Lamme, 1976).

Much research supports the topic of reading aloud. Porter (1969) developed research to analyze if fourth, fifth, and sixth grade student's reading abilities and interests would be increased by a program of reading aloud. Porter trained twenty-one high school juniors to read aloud to one thousand two hundred two children in forty-two fourth, fifth and sixth grade classes at several inner city schools in Columbus, Ohio. This was done bi-weekly for twenty weeks. The students were pretested and divided into a control and an experimental group. The control group was not read to. By investigating the data, the total experimental group differed significantly from the total control group in vocabulary, comprehension, total reading and interest in reading. The fourth grade had greater significant differences between groups than the fifth and sixth grades. Porter (1969) concluded that teachers should see the importance of providing time for reading aloud,

especially in the inner-city schools. She stressed that teachers make time for reading aloud in the classroom, since it contributed to both achievement and interest in reading.

In McCormick's article she states that reading aloud to young children can affect their reading interests. She cites the studies of Mason and Blanton (1971) for support. Since the children were pre-readers, stories were read aloud to them. One crucial finding of the study was that, after the children learned to read, they were more eager to read for themselves the books which had been read aloud to them, or books of the same type, than to read other books. Mason and Blanton say, "Apparently, exposure to a good story increases one's desire to read it for himself."

In a study conducted by Gloria Blatt (1981), a group of children were examined for four years. The purpose of the study was to improve reading interests by providing children time to read, using literature to teach reading and by reading aloud to children. The results indicated that students develop because they are persuaded by the social setting in which they are familiar with. When children see that adults value reading, they are affected in a positive way, and, thus, their attitudes and motivation will improve.

Meter (1990) found an association between second grade children whose parents read aloud to them and the improvement of reading achievement. The read aloud program was done for a period of nine weeks, with the children being read aloud to by either the researcher or their parents. He reported the following comparisons were statistically

significant at the .05 level. The children who were read aloud to, compared to the control group, had a higher reading achievement on the following dependent variables: (a) phoneme/grapheme - consonants, (b) phoneme/grapheme - vowels, (c) vocabulary in context, (d) word-part clues, (e) reading comprehension, and (f) total reading battery.

Harrison (1994) conducted a practicum to remediate the ineffectual value placed on reading by third grade students in a rural school in Georgia. It was stated that these students were not motivated to read; therefore, they read poorly. The researcher implemented a program for a 12 week period for 39 third grade students. The plan included a 20 minute period daily of read aloud time. After the read aloud time a discussion and journal writing were held. In the journal, students were told to write any thoughts on the daily reading.

An attitude inventory that the researcher made was given before the start of the study and it was repeated at the end of the study. Positive responses were used from this inventory to determine if attitudes toward reading had improved as a result of the read aloud. In the first administration of the inventory, 39 students showed 158 positive responses out of 273 inventory questions. In the second administration of the inventory a total of 35 students showed 196 positive responses out of 245 questions. Another indication of the practicum's read aloud treatment effectiveness was the positive reading attitude expresses over the 12 weeks in the students' daily journal writings. Harrison's goal at the end of the

practicum was for the students to enjoy and chose to read. According to Harrison this goal was met.

All teachers want their student to be motivated to learn. Jere Brophy (1988) describes student motivation to learn as "a student tendency to find academic activities meaningful and worthwhile and to try to derive the intended academic benefits from them." (pp. 205 - 206)

In summary, the research demonstrated that reading aloud may motivate students to read independently. Research has shown that reading aloud is a powerful tool for helping students increase their interest in reading and in developing a positive attitude toward reading, however further research is needed to investigate reading aloud in the classroom especially since research has shown that reading aloud is not an integral part of the instructional day for middle grade students. The power of reading aloud has not been realized to its fullest potential.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

Estes Scale to Measure Attitudes Toward Reading

CIRCLE ONE

Teacher_____ BOY GIRL

Directions: Reach each statement carefully. Decide how you feel about each statement. Circle the word or words to describe how you feel about each statement.

1. Reading is for learning but not for enjoyment.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. Money spend on books is well spent.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. There is nothing to be gained from reading books.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. Books are a bore.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. Reading is a good way to spend spare time.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. Sharing books in class is a waste of time.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. Reading turns me on.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. Reading only good for grade grubbers.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. Books aren't usually good enough to finish.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. Reading is rewarding to me.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

11. Reading becomes boring after about an hour.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

12. Most books are too long and dull.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

13. Free reading doesn't teach anything.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

14. There should be more time for free reading during the school day.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

15. There are many books which I hope to read.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

16. Books should not be read except for class requirements.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

17. Reading is something I can do without.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

18. A certain amount of summer vacation should be set aside for reading.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

19. Books make good presents.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

20. Reading is dull.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree